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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAR ES SALAAM 000010

SIPDIS

AF/E FOR TREADWELL, INR FOR EHRENREICH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/06/2020

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SUBJECT: ZANZIBAR: CUF LEADER PROPOSES DELAYED ELECTIONS  
FOR POWER SHARING

REF: 2009 DAR ES SALAAM 765 ET AL

Classified By: Ambassador Alfonso E. Lenhardt for reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. Zanzibar opposition CUF leader Seif Sharif Hamad told Ambassador Lenhardt that he expected Zanzibar's House of Representatives would soon pass a constitutional amendment entrenching power sharing. Hamad said he agreed with Zanzibar President Karume that a referendum should be held to demonstrate popular support for an amendment (and provide political cover for Karume). Hamad argued for a delay of six to twelve months from the scheduled October 2010 elections to resolve ongoing voter registration issues and allow for the creation of a credible voters' register. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Civic United Front (CUF) Secretary-General Seif Sharif Hamad called on Ambassador Lenhardt January 6 to relate "positive developments" since his reconciliation with President Karume (reftel). Hamad outlined a power-sharing agreement under which the winning party would hold the presidency while the Chief Minister position would go to the second-place finisher. Ministries and Regional and District Commissioners would be divided proportionally according to the vote. He said the mechanism would be a constitutional amendment to entrench the formula.

¶3. (C) Hamad related that Karume insisted such an amendment be put to the Zanzibari people as a referendum, in order to bring along elements of ruling CCM that oppose power sharing. Hamad acknowledged that CUF had rejected the idea of a referendum at the end of the last failed "Muafaka" talks, but said CUF now accepted it "as long as there is a timetable." He agreed that both CUF and CCM should campaign for a "yes" vote in a referendum (with possible joint campaign rallies). Hamad said that once the Zanzibar House approved the constitutional amendment, the Zanzibar Government would quickly prepare amendments to the electoral laws to permit a referendum. According to CUF's constitutional experts, no change to the Union constitution would be needed.

¶4. (C) Hamad worked his way around to his key point that he would support a six to twelve month delay in elections to resolve problems with voter registration. He disclaimed credit for the idea, which he said was raised initially by the Council of Imams and subsequently echoed by Mainland MP Rafael Chegeni. Hamad observed that Karume himself was "reluctant, not in favor" of the proposal, which would also require a change to the Zanzibar constitution. Hamad characterized his own support for the idea as better than the risk of failure with the current election schedule. He noted

that CCM aspirants to succeed Karume opposed any extension of his term (and also opposed reconciliation). (Note: Hamad confidant and CUF Foreign Liaison Ismail Jussa floated the idea of a delayed election with the English-language daily "The Citizen" on January 4. Public response from CCM officialdom ranged from sharply negative (CCM Mainland leader Pius Msekwa) to silent (Karume). End Note.) Hamad said he was making the rounds of embassies and influential Tanzanians to seek support, and had gotten positive responses from EAC Secretary-General Juma Mwapachu and former president Mkapa, among others. He said he left it to Karume to discuss this and other election issues with President Kikwete and the GOT.

¶5. (C) Hamad asserted that despite his public reconciliation with Karume, the problems with the registration process continued unabated. Of the 44 constituencies that had completed the first round, registration reached only 40 percent of eligible voters (compared to over 90 percent registration in past elections). Moreover, ZEC had admitted problems with double registrations. Hamad said a credible voters' register was needed prior to the proposed referendum, to include verification of voters on the list. CUF has also proposed establishing an interparty supervisory body for the Zanzibar Election Commission (ZEC), which would ensure full and fair registration. With the second round due to start in February, Hamad observed that with full cooperation of all parties, ZEC could complete a fair process in 8-10 weeks.

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Lenhardt reiterated to Hamad the U.S. interest in seeing free, fair and transparent elections, as well as our support for reconciliation on Zanzibar. He did

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not express a view on the proposal to extend Karume's stay in office beyond his current mandate.

¶7. (C) COMMENT: Although the grand scheme outlined by Hamad might succeed, it faces numerous serious obstacles, not least an increasingly shorter time horizon. We are concerned that the parties may not be able to manage the complexities of the types of constitutional and legal changes required, not to mention selling a deal to their supporters. The plan implies increased costs to conduct the election, since the 2010 Union elections (for President and parliamentarians) will in any case proceed on schedule in October.

LENHARDT